

Gloucester Rugby's season so far has been an eventful one, but one that augurs well for the future.

Director of Rugby Nigel Davies has steadied the ship since his arrival in the summer and, in a remarkably short period of time, moulded Gloucester into a competitive, difficult to beat outfit.

It's not been easy. The injury list has, at times, been crippling. Yet the former Scarlets man has skillfully juggled his resources and managed to remain competitive on all fronts.

The Aviva Premiership has,

of course, been the bread and butter for the club and the Cherry and Whites currently occupy fifth position in the table.

A disappointing home reverse on the opening day of the season against Northampton was quickly forgotten, and the team have gone on to take some notable scalps.

Form on the road, in particular, has been better than in seasons gone by, and a rare victory here at the Madejski was achieved back in September. Even the two defeats, at Harlequins and Saracens, have garnered losing bonus points.

But this afternoon is all about the Amlin Challenge Cup, and the pool already looks to be a shoot out between London Irish and Gloucester.

Both teams have two wins from two matches so far, although the Exiles lead the group by a point. These back to back matches will go a long way to determining the destiny of the pool. With a Heineken Cup spot up

With a Heineken Cup spot up for grabs for the winners of the tournament, it's a competition which deserves focus and attention and both teams will be up for the fight this afternoon.

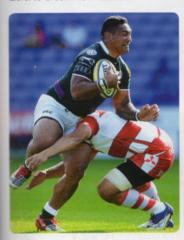
KOOGA

LONDON IRISH 31 Gloucester Rugby 40

Our Aviva curtain raiser at the Madejski was certainly a thriller with both sides contributing to a compelling spectacle.

Gloucester prospect and recent England debutant Freddie Burns was the star for the visitors with a frightening 25 point tally at the close.

A back and forth battle ebbed and flowed, with tries for the Exiles from Ojo, O'Leary and Aulika warming the cockles of the home faithful, but Gloucester rallied and put in a blistering last quarter, scoring crucially through Simpson-Daniel and Qera to break Irish hearts.





Tom Savage



For a man who was playing in the National Leagues not so very long ago, Tom Savage has come a long way in a short period of time.

he skippered Hartpury RFC in with the first team.

The Rugby World Cup gave him an opportunity to taste first team originally expected, but he seized the chance with both hands and went on to make 12 starts in 2011-12.

He's already well on his way to surpassing that total this season. whether at blindside flanker or in the second row, he is producing high quality performances on a weekly basis.

Nigel Davies



Nigel Davies joined Gloucester Rugby as Director of Rugby in June 2012.

between 1988 and 1997, before joining the Welsh national coaching set up under Gareth Jenkins.

he played 498 games for Llanelli played in a record nine Welsh cup

top-flight rugby for more than 28

He returned to the Scarlets as Head Coach in May 2008 leading the development of the and international scene today new rugby talent.

TODAY'S TEAMS







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GLOUCESTER

TOM HOMER TOPSY OJO **GUY ARMITAGE** SHANE GERAGHTY SAILOSI TAGICAKIBAU IAN HUMPHREYS

DARREN ALLINSON MAX LAHIFF DAVID PAICE HALANI AULIKA **BRYN EVANS**

MATT GARVEY DECLAN DANAHER (C) JAMIE GIBSON OFISA TREVIRANUS

SCOTT LAWSON ALEX CORBISIERO LEO HALAVATAU GEORGE SKIVINGTON JEBB SINCLAIR ANTHONY WATSON STEVE SHINGLER JACK MOATES

RUGBY MARTYN THOMAS

SHANE MONAHAN TIM MOLENAAR MIKE TINDALL SHANE MONAHAN

TIM TAYLOR 10 DAN ROBSON 09

NICK WOOD

02 DARREN DAWIDIUK 03 SHAUN KNIGHT

04 TOM SAVAGE

05 WILL JAMES

PETER BUXTON (C) 06

MATT COX

SIONE KALAMAFONI 08

KOREE BRITTON 16 DAN MURPHY 17

RUPERT HARDEN 18 JIM HAMILTON 19

GARETH EVANS 20 DAVE LEWIS

21 FREDDIE BURNS 22

ROB COOK

THE **OFFICIALS**

23

REFEREE: Dudley Phillips (Irl)

ASSISTANT REFEREES: Olly Hodges (Irl), Barrie O'Connell (Irl)

Amlin Challenge Cup











